



# Mona Z. Hanna

## Office Managing Partner

### Advertising & Digital Media, Banking & Financial Services, Insurance

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## Profile

Mona Hanna is Managing Partner of M&R's Orange County office and the firm's National Complex & Class Action Trial Chair. A premiere trial lawyer who has been named one of the best in Southern California, Mona takes a unique approach to her caseload. Her focus, from the beginning of any given dispute to its conclusion, is always on the goals of her client, whether that be an early resolution at the pleading stage, a jury verdict, or an outcome somewhere in between. Indeed, Mona has been able to achieve a high percentage of successful case resolutions for those she represents by clearly defining their objectives and staying "on-goal."

What sets Mona apart from so many of her peers is her capacity to deliver innovative solutions in cases of first impression and in matters in which her clients face the potential for catastrophic exposure. This is oftentimes the circumstance in the insurance and consumer class action, labor,

employment, and commercial lawsuits she handles. That Mona has become an authority in the insurance, advertising and digital media, and financial services industries over her long professional career also differentiates her.

Whether defending against claims of unfair competition, unfair business practices, misappropriation of trade secrets, professional negligence, wrongful termination, harassment and discrimination, wage and hour violations, or any of the other matters that have crossed her desk, Mona's results are noteworthy. She has secured countless favorable outcomes in state and federal courts and courts of appeal, many of which have been memorialized in landmark published decisions. Another of her strengths is the use of alternative dispute resolution – mediation and arbitration – to avoid costly litigation.

Beyond her role as Office Managing Partner and head of M&R's Litigation Department, Mona is former Chair of the firm's Class Action Group, founder of the Women Attorneys of M&R, and a member of the Executive, Recruiting, and Diversity, Multiculturalism, and Inclusion Committees.

Mona is active in Working Wardrobes, an organization helping thousands of individuals overcome obstacles to assimilate back into the workforce. In 2014, she was elected to the Orange County Bar Association's Board of Directors.

### **Associated Industries**

Advertising & Digital Media, Banking & Financial Services, Insurance

### **Associated Practices**

Class Action & Complex Litigation

### **Representative Matters**

**Commercial & Business Litigation:** Obtained an eight-figure verdict after a seven-day federal court trial on behalf of a full-service global private aviation company that sued its former Assistant Director of Operations for breach of contract and breach of duty of loyalty and associated entities for intentional interference with contractual relations. The case stemmed from the ex-employee stealing the aviation firm's customers., **Copyright Troll Litigation:** Successfully represented a publicly held company in the business of digital rights enforcement on behalf of music publisher and video distribution clients in a widely publicized and nationwide putative class action originally alleging causes of action for (1) violations of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (47 USC § 227); (2) violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq.); (3) violations of the Rosenthal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (Cal. Civ. Code § 1788 et seq.); and (4) abuse of process arising from an alleged misuse of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act subpoena procedure. We ably demonstrated that the class representative's claims against our client were tenuous, at best, which initially led class counsel to drop the class representatives and voluntarily dismiss the federal and state Fair Debt claims. Thereafter, we brought a complex special motion to strike the remaining abuse of process claim under California's anti-SLAPP statute, which motion was granted in its entirety. Consequently, plaintiff was ordered to pay our client's attorney's fees incurred in bringing the anti-SLAPP motion., **Unfair Competition Defense:** Represented a former executive VP (defendant) of a title insurance company (plaintiffs) against

allegations that he breached his contract and stole trade secrets. Defendant was hired by plaintiffs with a promise of receiving a 5% ownership interest in the company, but left to go back to his former employer, a competing title insurance firm, after the promises did not come to fruition. Plaintiffs accused defendant of wooing its customers, claiming \$14M in lost profits and \$250M lost value to the business. After a seven-week trial, a jury found against the plaintiffs and awarded defendant \$50,000 on his breach of contract counterclaim., Breach of Contract, Implied Covenant of Good Faith: Successfully defended an insurance company in a breach of contract, breach of implied covenant of good faith, fraud and violation of public policy lawsuit. Eliminated eight causes of action, resulting in a nominal, discounted cost-of-defense settlement after establishing fraud on the part of plaintiffs and demonstrating justification for voiding plaintiff's insurance policy., Class Action Defense: Successfully defended seven insurance companies in King v. National General Insurance Company, et al., in which the United States District Court for the Northern District of California stayed a case of first impression alleging violations of "good driver discount" laws, finding that fundamental issues in the litigation – specifically, determination of Super Group exemption and Affinity Group status – should be addressed by the Department of Insurance pursuant to the primary jurisdiction doctrine., Insurance Consumer Class Action: Successfully defended a national insurance brokerage against a class action alleging that the recording of customer telephone calls without proper disclosures was a violation of California statutes. At the time, California courts were interpreting this type of conduct as illegal and holding to the statutory damages of \$5,000 per call. In this case, there were approximately 600,000 alleged calls and potentially billions of dollars in statutory damages. Designed a defense predicated on the legislative intent of the statute dating back to 1967, arguing that the law at issue was designed to protect against "industrial espionage." After intense argument, the court agreed with the defense and dismissed the case in favor of the brokerage., Insurance Employment Class Action: A prominent insurance brokerage was held liable for violating California's wage and hour overtime laws, among related issues. With the client facing a \$42M judgment, designed a defense around the argument that the judgment should be reduced to \$1.2M because of a conflict in federal and state employment laws that were being misapplied by plaintiffs' lawyers. Litigation turned on the question of legislative intent, which led federal court to limit the judgment, as suggested, to \$1.2M. On appeal, the Ninth Circuit upheld the ruling., Malicious Prosecution: A national insurance company was sued for malicious prosecution by a former customer who the company had reported to the Department of Insurance for fraud. The insurance company had previously been represented by another attorney who attempted to obtain a dismissal of the action but failed. After being substituted in as counsel, prevailed on a motion to strike and in the subsequent appeal, recovering all attorney fees incurred by client., Media Company Derivative Shareholder Litigation: A founder of one of the largest media companies in its space was under attack from shareholders seeking to take control of the company. In a strategy designed to retain control or force a lucrative buyout, filed a lawsuit that was eventually resolved, with an approximate 40% premium over the value of the founder's shares., Shareholder/Partnership Dispute: Shareholders filed suit alleging \$140M in damages against a company's CEO, executives, and board members, alleging that they were "duped" into selling their shares just prior to the sale of the company for greater value. The clients were on the eve of settling for approximately \$40M when they decided to retain M&R. Led team that redesigned clients' defense, and after two years of litigation, obtained a dismissal of the entire lawsuit the day prior to trial., Trademark Litigation: Obtained a seven-figure resolution on behalf of a manufacturer of medical scrubs in a significant trademark infringement case filed against a competing company that produced a competing collection of scrubs marketed to medical personnel. Throughout the litigation, the defendant failed to abide by the orders of the court, including the requirement to respond to written discovery. Consequently, the magistrate judge issued a massive

\$250,000 sanction award against the defendant and its attorney, and thereafter issued terminating sanctions in favor of our client. Thereafter, our motion for default judgment was granted. The defendant then initiated a series of appeals and bankruptcy court proceedings, all of which were unsuccessful, leading to its agreement to compensate our client by way of a structured settlement., Trade Secrets: An owner of a small insurance brokerage was sued by two longtime former employees for wrongful termination. After determining the plaintiffs were wrongfully using the brokerage's client list to solicit customers, filed a cross complaint for misappropriation of trade secrets. Subsequently established through depositions of the parties and client's expert that the plaintiffs' claims were not viable, leading to a successful summary judgment on the plaintiffs' complaint. At trial on the cross complaint, received a unanimous jury verdict for \$500,000 in compensatory damages., and Wage & Hour: Represented a metal supply company facing a putative wage and hour class action lawsuit brought by a former employee. Filed a strong petition for arbitration, which forced plaintiff to accept mediation, where it was demonstrated that should it go to trial, the case would not be a class-wide arbitration, and that it would likely be limited in scope. This led to a successful settlement of the case for pennies on the dollar (encompassing 265 current and former employees).

### **Bar & Court Admissions**

- State Bar of California
- California Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Northern, Central, Eastern and Southern Districts of California

### **Industry Associations Industries**

- National Association of Woman Business Owners
- Litigation Counsel of America

### **Professional Affiliations**

- Orange County Bar Association (Board of Directors, Finance Committee Member, Business Litigation Section Chair, Labor & Employment Section)
- California Bar Association
- Los Angeles Bar Association

### **Community Involvement**

- Working Wardrobes (Smart Women's Circle)
- Women's Association of Villa Park

### **Education**

- University of California, Hastings College of Law, J.D.
- California State University of Los Angeles, B.S.

## Award & Special Recognition

- Women in Law Honoree, *Orange County Business Journal* (2022, 2023, 2024)
- Power of Women Honoree, *Orange Coast* (2024)
- Top Woman Lawyer, *Daily Journal* (2021)
- Top 50 Women Lawyers In Southern California, *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2021)
- Orange County Lawyer of the Year (Litigation and Insurance), *Best Lawyers* (2021)
- Identified by the Esteemed Directory, M&R's Commercial Litigation practice was "Recommended" by The Legal 500 in 2019
- Woman to Watch, *Business Insurance* (2018)
- Insurance Litigation "Lawyer of the Year" for Orange County, *Best Lawyers* (2017 and 2021)
- America USA Guide, *Best Lawyers* (2015-2023)
- Super Lawyer, *Super Lawyers Magazine* (2006-2025)
- Inducted into the Trial Lawyer Honorary Society and the Litigation Counsel of America
- Nominated thrice for the "Top Women in Business" award, *Orange County Business Journal*
- Five-Year Membership Award, *National Association of Woman Business Owners*
- Top Verdicts, *Daily Journal* (2014)

## Newsroom

Headlines - 01/24/2024 3:16pm  
Congratulations, Mona!

Headlines - 11/16/2023 2:11pm  
Congratulations, Mona!

Media Mentions - 10/17/2023 1:06pm  
Why This Midsize Firm Decided to Take Trial Training In House

Headlines - 08/15/2023 10:21am  
Mona Hanna and Kelly Hagemann have been featured by the Orange County Business Journal in its Leaders of Influence

Headlines - 08/22/2022 3:32pm  
Mona Hanna Featured in Orange County Business Journal's Leaders of Influence, Women in Law Edition

Media Mentions - 11/10/2021 10:00am  
Michelman & Robinson Eyes Expansion In 2022